

From: Charles Ellmaker
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 1/24/02 9:27am
Subject: Microsoft Settlement

Dear Sirs/Madams -

It appears that only Microsoft (a very capable firm, obviously) has the power to turn a trust-busting suit to its own advantage.

Having read that Microsoft wanted to compensate the world for its misdoings by giving away free software/hardware to schools, I was flabbergasted. I have no doubt that this software would not be targeted to schools that already use Microsoft software but to those that use someone else's (Apple's, perhaps?) A schoolchild could figure out where this would lead. My understanding is that this "remedy" has been quashed, or at least I hope so.

Unfortunately, this is only the tip of the iceberg. You know the details, but allowing Microsoft free rein to dictate standards which they will control, especially over something as open and powerful as the internet, is a folly of unbelievable proportions (and one with a host of unforeseeable consequences to go with the foreseeable ones).

Even outside of the United States (I am currently working in Sierra Leone), the reach of Microsoft is basically absolute. My own head office tried to forbid my use of non-Windows software simply because "we use Windows," they said. This even though my overseas office uses compatible Microsoft Word and Excel, but on Macintoshes. Obviously Microsoft's reach and influence already exceed all bounds of reason.

Please do not allow them even greater control over the oxygen that every organization breathes: information and its movement.

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